



# Class A Status Brucellosis Fact Sheet

On February 13th, 2004 the State of Wyoming lost its Brucellosis Free status and has been designated as a Brucellosis Class A State under federal APHIS regulations until Wyoming can again meet the federal guidelines of Brucellosis Free classification. The following document serves as an aide to help understand Class A regulations and the current procedures now in place as Wyoming works to regain our Brucellosis Free Status.

## **Background**

During the past 19 years, Wyoming greatly enjoyed and closely guarded our brucellosis free status. This allowed Wyoming producers to market their livestock throughout the nation without testing requirements being imposed upon them. In late November of 2003, a brucellosis test registered positive for a herd in Sublette County. At this time it appears likely that infected elk are the cause of the disease transmission. Infected cattle from this herd were later found in a Washakie County feedlot. Due to mandatory federal requirements when brucellosis is found in more than one herd of cattle in a Brucellosis Free State during a two-year period, the state loses its Free Status and is downgraded to Class A Status. As Wyoming works diligently to regain our Brucellosis Free status, the following actions are being taken:

## **Current Class A Statewide Testing Requirements:**

Sexually intact cattle that are 18 months of age and older being sold or transported from Wyoming to another state are now required to be tested for brucellosis. This test must be performed within thirty days prior to a change in ownership or interstate movement, and the test results must be negative for brucellosis.

- Steers and spayed heifers do **not** have to be tested.
- Cattle under 18 months of age do **not** have to be tested.
- Breeding cattle moving as a commuter herd to an adjacent state may qualify for an exemption to the test requirement. This exemption is to be obtained from the state veterinarian in the state of destination in cooperation with the Wyo State Vet and is done on a case-by-case basis.
- Cattle moving from a farm or ranch of origin directly to a slaughter plant **or** directly to an approved livestock auction market to be sold and moved directly to slaughter, do **not** have to be tested. The identification of the home ranch must be maintained with these cattle.

**Cattle from a Brucellosis Certified Free Herd do not have to be tested.**

A Brucellosis Certified Free Herd is a herd in which all test eligible cattle have tested negative to two brucellosis tests 10 to 14 months apart with annual retesting required to maintain certification. Herd Certification is done by USDA/APHIS along with state authorization and must meet strict record keeping to comply with APHIS regulations.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Brucellosis?**

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that causes cattle, elk, and bison to abort their calves. It also causes reduced birth rate, birth weight and poor reproductive health in livestock. Livestock infected with brucellosis can transmit the disease to humans through dairy milk consumption causing undulant fever and variant long term adverse health effects.

### **What does Test Eligible mean?**

Test eligible cattle are sexually intact cattle 18 months of age and older.

### **The test is required within 30 days prior to change of ownership or interstate movement. Does this mean I have to have the cattle tested 30 days before they sell or are moved interstate?**

**No.** There is a 30-day window before the cattle are sold or moved. This means sometime within one to thirty days before selling or movement, but the test results must first come back negative.

### **Can Cattle be transferred intrastate without having to perform a brucellosis test?**

**Yes.** Cattle can be transferred anywhere with the state of Wyoming during our Class A status period without having a brucellosis test as long as there is not a change in ownership.

### **Can cattle be taken to other states to be fed during the winter months, or grazed during the summer months?**

**Yes,** as long as the cattle are brought back into the state before transfer of ownership. Cattle are permitted to be transported temporarily across state lines for feeding purposes with the implicit directive that no cattle shall be sold or shall remain over the state line once grazing/feeding is completed. A waiver of a test requirement would need to be requested of the State Vet in the state of destination.

### **What happens if an animal is positive on the test?**

- If an animal tests with a suspect positive titer, that animal will be quarantined and held for a retest after 30 days.
- If an animal tests with a positive reactor titer, that animal and the associated herd will be quarantined and **may** require a complete herd test for brucellosis.

### **Where can I get my cattle tested?**

- Cattle can be tested by your herd veterinarian at your farm or ranch. The blood will be sent the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory (WSVL) for analysis.
- Cattle can be tested at the livestock auction market by the market veterinarian who conduct an on-site test. All samples are then forwarded to the WSVL for confirmation of test results.

### **Should I be worried about consuming an animal that has tested positive for brucellosis?**

**No.** The primary risk of transmission to humans is through direct contact with placental or fetal fluids and tissues of infected animals. Brucellosis is not a food safety issue for Americans. Always remember that meat is to be cooked and milk is to be pasteurized before consumption.

**How much does the test cost?**

- The expense of the test will depend on a variety of factors including location of the cattle, the facilities, and the veterinarian.
- The veterinarians' fee is up to each individual veterinarian.
- The USDA/APHIS pays for the laboratory test fee.
- The Wyoming legislature allocated funding to pay up to \$3.50 per head tested directly to veterinarians. This will be paid from the WLSB to veterinarians upon invoice and should help defray testing expenses. If your veterinarian charges more than \$3.50 /head, you will be responsible to pay the balance.

**How long will this test requirement last?**

- The requirement will last until Wyoming regains Brucellosis Free Status.

**How do we regain Free Status?**

- We have to comply with the test requirements of Class A Status.
- If no new infection has been found after one (1) year of testing (February 13, 2004 - February 13, 2005), we can apply for reinstatement of our Brucellosis Free Status.

**Will we still have to test some cattle even after we get back to Free Status?**

- Yes, USDA/APHIS recommends that when a state goes from Class A to Free Status that some level of surveillance testing is maintained for at least two (2) years.
- As long as the infected wildlife reservoir remains in the Greater Yellowstone Area, Wyoming will need to continue with surveillance testing.
- The level and extent of testing will depend on the WLSB and the Wyoming cattle industry.

**What can I do to prevent Brucellosis in my cattle herd?**

Good management including:

- Brucellosis vaccination with RB 51 of all female calves
- Temporal and spatial separation of your cattle from sources of Brucellosis infection
- Testing of purchased replacement animals.
- Speak with animal health officials about further vaccination possibilities in high risk areas.

**What is the state doing to curb this problem?**

- Participation in the Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee.
  - Governor Freudenthal appointed a task force called the Wyoming Brucellosis Coordination Team to address the livestock and wildlife issues associated with Brucellosis.
  - WLSB and the Wyoming Department of Agriculture officials are working with other states to maintain the marketability of Wyoming cattle.
  - The Wyoming Game & Fish Dept. continues to be proactive in working on brucellosis issues.
  - WLSB Chapter 2 Brucellosis Rules will soon be out for public comment.
- The State is actively retesting quarantined herds to ensure no new cases are discovered. During the first several weeks of May retesting will commence in high-risk areas.

**Please call any of the following agencies with questions:**

Wyoming  
Livestock Board  
(307) 777-7515 ext. 1



Wyoming Dept.  
of Agriculture  
(307) 777-7321



USDA/ APHIS  
(307)772-2180